



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2011

Release # 001-11

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First Army East welcomes new commanding general

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. – First Army Commanding General Lt. Gen. Thomas Miller welcomed Maj. Gen. Kevin R. Wendel during a change of command ceremony March 1 at McGill Training Center on Fort Meade. Wendel assumed command of First Army Division East from Maj. Gen. J. Michael Bednarek.

Wendel assumed command of First Army Division East following an assignment as the deputy director for operations, U.S. Army Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany. Prior to his assignment with AFRICOM he served as the director of operations, U.S. Central Command, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

“You are truly the vanguards of what we do around the globe,” said Wendel. “I truly believe in this mission. I see that this mission we have can’t be underestimated, shortchanged or taken for granted.

“The stakes are too high not to do it right.”

Since June 2008, Bednarek has overseen the mobilization of more than 105,000 servicemembers in support of missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Kosovo and Egypt. He also ensured more than 48,000 servicemembers demobilized safely and returned home to their loved ones.

“He was a Soldier first and a trainer second, and everything after that we sorted it out on the side,” Miller said of Bednarek. “What a tremendous job you’ve done in training Soldiers.”

Bednarek is nominated for promotion to lieutenant general and awaits Senate confirmation to assume command of First Army in Atlanta, Ga. First Army is the headquarters command of First Army Division East and First Army Division West.

First Army Division East mobilizes, trains, validates and deploys Reserve component units in accordance with combatant commander, Department of the Army and Forces Command directives. As directed, the division provides training to joint, interagency, combined and active Army forces. The division and its nine brigades conduct training at mobilization training centers located at Camp Atterbury, Ind.; Camp Shelby, Miss.; and Joint Base Myer-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.



Cutline: 110301-A-RB836-033 -- Maj. Gen. Kevin R. Wendel, commanding general First Army Division East, passes the First Army Division East flag back to Command Sgt. Maj. Edwin Rodriguez after receiving command of the division in a ceremony held at McGill Training Center March 1. The passing of the flag colors signifies that the Soldiers of the division are never without leadership.